

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Photo/Debbie Connelly

Vacant property located just south of the post office will be purchased by the Arnold Economic Development Corporation, cleared and made ready for future housing. The Village Board of Trustees gave their approval for the purchase, using LB840 funds, at a special meeting held on August 24.

Plan Approved to Make Way for Future Housing

AEDC presents comprehensive plan to Village Board

By Janet Larreau

A plan is now in place for future development of lots located just south of the Arnold Post Office. The Village Board of Trustees gave their approval for the purchase of the property at a special meeting held on August 24.

Director Cheryl Carson and AEDC board members Vicki Ambler, Brent Garrison and Karen Horst, made the request on behalf of the AEDC, saying that Lots One (1), Two (2), Three (3) and Four (4), Block Six (6), Original Town, have been identified for sale.

The AEDC's goal is to purchase and secure ownership of the lots, remove unsafe existing structures and plan for future development that will be beneficial to the community of Arnold. The lots are located inside the city limits. Currently, the North two lots are zoned for

residential and the single south lot is zoned vacant/undeveloped. The comprehensive plan suggests future use of these lots should all be residential.

The purchase of the lots and plans thereafter all adhere to guidelines of eligible economic development activities as stated in the Arnold Economic Development Plan.

Carson said that in a survey conducted by the AEDC, many comments were received concerning appropriate housing for residents.

“Our community overall lacks housing choices for citizens,” she said. “For just one example, Arnold lacks transitional housing for residents who may like to downsize from their current larger home into something smaller that is lower maintenance, requires less work, is ready to move into, energy efficient, modern and closer to downtown. Our community lacks options, which makes it

difficult for them to move out of their existing home, which in turn would open that home up to a family to move into. The location and proximity of the lots to downtown provide ease of access to services for any future development.”

Plans will be to rezone the lots and then offer divided lots for development of duplex housing. Any funds received from the future sale of the lots would be placed into the Arnold Economic LB840 program. Carson said that since the current infrastructure in place is not sufficient for future development of this block, the AEDC would like to work with the Village to develop a plan to make upgrades possible and completed as funding allows in the Village's budget.

The current estimated costs for sewer and water upgrades is \$61,000.00, according to Superintendent Doug De Laune.

Village Board members ap-

proved expending \$27,472.00 from the Economic Development Fund for costs associated in purchasing the property.

Plans are to work with the Arnold Fire Department to burn down the existing structures and the Village to remove debris. Taxes are currently \$337.64 and the property would need to be cleared by December 31, 2020, to decrease the tax amount. The AEDC realizes it would need to pay the property tax.

The AEDC will work with Jay Gormley of Nebraska Land Surveying and within the guidelines of the Village to designate the new subdivision. The cost of surveying will be between \$1,500.00 and \$2,200.00.

The AEDC plans to have the lots mowed until they are sold.

The sub-division will be named after the late Fitz Harris – a much beloved resident and veteran – who was the former owner of the property.

COVID-19 Positives Rise In County

AUGUST 28 - August has been an active month for coronavirus in the Loup Basin Public Health Department (LBPHD) district by adding sixty-nine cases during the month to date. Community spread has become more prevalent across the district, most noticeably in Custer and Valley Counties. The overall district positivity has risen to 4.20% from 3.22% at the end of July.

Through the public health interview conducted with each case, LBPHD has concluded that many people with COVID-19 start the disease process with mild symptoms and therefore are not being tested in a timely manner. “Some people develop allergy like symptoms in the beginning and suffer through for a few days before they realize their symptoms are getting worse and new symptoms are emerging,” stated LBPHD Director, Charles Cone. “These same people are unknowingly shedding the virus at work, to their household members and at events they are attending before realizing they have COVID-19. If we can get symptomatic individuals tested in a timelier manner, their contacts can be identified and quarantined more effectively,” Cone acknowledged.

LBPHD wants to stress the importance of staying home when sick. Governor Pete Ricketts wanted to ensure that all Nebraskans had access to free COVID-19 testing. It is as simple as visiting testnebraska.com, signing up, taking the assessment, and scheduling a time to be tested at the location that works best for you. Test Nebraska offers two locations throughout the LBPHD district located at Valley County Health System in Ord and Melham Medical Center in Broken Bow. A third Test Nebraska site should become available in the district in the next couple months. You do NOT have to be tested within your own health district. You can sign up for any Test Ne-

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Historical Marker Placed at Hotel Custer

This week we continue to report on Rotary's on-going historical marker project. The Hotel Custer marker reads as follows:

Custer Hotel - 1928

Grand Central Hotel, built by Robert Probert in 1887 was just south of Unganst's Hardware store, which he had also built, in 1884. Both buildings were on the corner of the present Custer Hotel lot. A series of folks managed the hotel until it was sold in 1903 to Henry Imboden, who still owned it when it burned down in 1908. Clyde Maddox and James Duckett bought the burned out lots to build a tin covered building. It housed Arnold's first Opera House on the top floor with an outside stairway on the north side. The lower floor housed several stores through the years (as many as three at one time): Killian & Priel Clothing (later sold to Archie Robison who added a revolving glass hat-rack display for 200 hats), T.L. Jones Arnold Hardware Co. (1912-1914), Thelan Drug, and Farmer's Union. The upper floor was the scene of many social gatherings until 1927 when an early morning fire again destroyed the building on this spot (the second fire in 19 years). Andy Comer, sleeping above his barber shop located south of Maddox-Duckett, was awakened by the sound of glass shattering and ran to ring the fire bell. Roy Fraker, sleeping in the rear of the Maddox-Duckett building awakened to find the roof and wall of his bedroom in flames. (The windows of the Arnold State Bank, Wehrley Theater, T.L. Jones Store, Shaw's Barber shop, and Green Parrot Café across the

street to the west, were all damaged by the intense heat. The American Legion had been meeting on the upper floor and all of their records, guns, and equipment were destroyed.) ~

John Jameson who had ended a partnership with William Conrad, kept his general merchandise store in the “Wall” building (Arnold's first brick structure) until he built his own Economy Department Store on this site where two fires had destroyed previous buildings. At that time, he was in a partnership with G.H. Johnson, a former Methodist Minister. Their new building would be yet another brick structure in town, replacing prior wooden structures and is now the present Custer Hotel. Farmers Union Store (lower floor) and the Jameson & Johnson building had their opening celebrations at the same time. (See the inscription “J&J 1928” at the top of the building.) Willa Phifer (Brummett) won the \$10 prize for her “Hotel Custer” entry naming the new building, and Mrs. Lawrence Christensen's winning store name was “Economy Department”. John Jameson's Economy Department store and Hotel Custer were a hit! Many shoppers were attracted to the penny scales at the front door, and his Piggly Wiggly (food chain) gave shoppers the chance to “help themselves”. The busy “soda fountain” had to be taken out in 1935 to make room for more groceries, leaving just the ice-cream equipment. A “Ten Day Sale” in 1929 kept 14 clerks busy each day. ~ Sometime between 1932-37, the Jameson's separated and Lillian Jameson bought out



Courtesy photo

Kim Beshaler (left) and April Tickle (right) hold the new historical marker for Hotel Custer.

G.H. Johnson's interest in the Economy Department store, while he retained his interest in Hotel Custer. Lillian sold the Economy Department store to Harry and Marjorie Edgington in 1945. The Edgingtons ran it for four years selling to Crawford and Julia Pool in 1949. ~ Oshkosh B'Gosh overalls sold for \$2.98 each while Pools ran the department store. ~ Judge Roy Blixt then took ownership of Custer Hotel until the early 1970's according to a family source. Blixt rented to Robert and Carolyn Foran in February of 1969. In May of 1978, Forans turned the department store over to Dot Gast with Dorothy O'dean Beeken as a clerk. Dot

ran the department store for several years, selling the entire building to Rod and Carol Watson who owned it until 1995. Rod had installed a shooting range and Carol did upholstery and wood repair/restoration on the upper floor. In the past 50-60 years, other businesses that have been or still are in this building include: Custer Café (bought by Broken Bow Production Credit) became FCO/PCA in 1977 with John McDonald in charge, Watson's Bakery, Rosentraters' Bakery (ran by Wanda and Paula), Flower's by Shavonne, Cutting Crew Beauty Salon, a Preschool, Farmhouse Antiques, Accountant Office, Sennett & Duncan

Law Office, Real Estate/Auction Office, and Touch of Grace Massage. Gail and Karen Coleman (present owners) bought the building from Watsons adding a laundromat and refinishing the upstairs for apartments. My sons Adam, Brandon, and Scott Crow helped me tear down the original tin ceiling metal in the rooms upstairs. The vintage decorative metal ceiling is now in the dining room of our house.

(Some information for the markers was taken from the book “One Hundred Years on the South Loup” by Norene Hall Mills. Written and prepared by Berni Crow 5/18/2020)